



DHCA Housing Policy Forum November 30, 2011

TESTIMONY of Abe Schuchman, Executive Director Housing Unlimited, Inc. (HUI)

INTRODUCTION

Housing Unlimited (HUI) provides permanent, affordable supportive independent scattered-site housing for very low income adults with psychiatric disabilities in Montgomery County.

Housing Unlimited (HUI) is extremely grateful for 17 years of partnership and support from DHCA. DHCA has played a pivotal role in assisting HUI grow from owning one home in 1995 serving five very low income (most HUI tenants have incomes below 15% of area median income) individuals with psychiatric disabilities to now in 2011 owning 47 homes and serving 138 individuals.

GRATITUDE FOR ALL OF DHCA'S SUPPORT

Revolving Loan Fund for Our Property Acquisitions: DHCA's loan funds to HUI to enable HUI to have a Revolving Loan Fund. These loan funds enable HUI to move swiftly to acquire new properties.

Permanent Financing of Our New Properties: DHCA's permanent financing loans to HUI (40 years, 0%, cash flow basis) have enabled HUI to acquire 47 homes over the past 17 years. These funds have served as a crucial "local match" to enable us to leverage over \$5million in state loans/grants to acquire the 48 homes.

Housing Unlimited, Inc. has received Maryland Nonprofits' Seal of Excellence for completing the Standards of Excellence Program. We proudly display this logo to demonstrate our commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethics and accountability in the nonprofit sector.





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Shallow Rent Subsidies for Our Tenants: *DHCA/ DHHS's Rental Assistance Program has provided crucial shallow rent subsidies of \$200/ HUI tenant. These funds have also served as a crucial "local match" to enable us to leverage over \$5million in state loans/grants to acquire the 47 homes.*

Loans to Renovate Our Properties: *DHCA's provision of forgivable renovation loans to HUI has allowed us to maintain our homes—particularly our homes built in the 1950s and 1960s—in excellent condition.*

Availability of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units: *DHCA's provision of new and resale MPDUS to certified nonprofits including HUI has enabled us to purchase 37 MPDUS—these very affordable properties are scattered throughout the County from Potomac to Germantown to White Oak.*

Operating Grants and Technical Assistance Grants to Support HUI: *DHCA's provision CHDO operating grants to HUI has provided crucial operating support to HUI and extended our capacity to expand and serve more individuals on our 300 plus waiting list. DHCA's provision of technical assistance grants—on matters ranging from strategic planning to technology-- has also greatly enhanced the capacity of our organization to move forward with slow, steady prudent growth of our affordable housing program.*

A REQUEST FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT

HUI is grateful for all the support it has received from DHCA. As DHCA forges its new Housing Policy, HUI respectfully requests that DHCA continue to include as a priority the assistance—in all the ways outlined above-- of affordable housing groups like HUI that are serving very low income adults with special needs. HUI in return will continue to work hard to leverage significant private dollars as well as state government dollars for our projects here in the County.

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Just recently, HUI was selected to participate in an innovative pilot program throughout the State of Maryland that will enable individuals with psychiatric disabilities the opportunity to live in housing that is least restrictive and more appropriate to their needed level of care. Since there has been a multi-year freeze on the number of supervised housing beds, movement has been limited for patients from acute care facilities to supervised housing and on to independent living with groups like Housing Unlimited.

We are honored to be selected for this program. The \$1.2 million in funding that has been committed to us from the State of Maryland (with \$400,000 in matching funds from DHCA) will allow Housing Unlimited to purchase eight new homes. That means that at least twenty new tenants will be offered a permanent affordable home that will enable them to become independent members of the community. These eight new homes will bring our total to 55; we will soon be serving nearly 160 people who are on the path to recovery and independence from psychiatric disabilities.

Thank you again for all your hard work and partnership. And thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

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